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ABSTRACT

Numerous structured programs exist for helping clients learn to manage their anger more effectively. These programs vary in intended audience, theoretical basis, teaching method, and actual skills and techniques used. A review of several structured programs follows. It is important to remember that prior to selecting an intervention, one must assess the expression, function, source, and resulting problems of a client's anger. In addition, one must consider the client's cultural needs, the ability of the client to transfer new skills to their daily environments, and the client's readiness and skill level for dealing with the problem in order to select interventions that will be effective. (GCP)

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by

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services Digest

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Anger Management 3: Structured Programs and Interventions

Eileen K. Hogan

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Numerous structured programs exist for helping clients learn to manage their anger more effectively. These programs vary in intended audience, theoretical basis, teaching method, and actual skills and techniques used. A review of several structured programs follows. It is important to remember that prior to selecting an intervention, one must assess the expression, function, source, and resulting problems of a client's anger (see Anger Management 1: An Overview for Counselors [ERIC Digest # EDO-CG-03-10]). In addition, one must consider the client's cultural needs, the ability of the client to transfer new skills to their daily environments, and the client's readiness and skill level for dealing with the problem in order to select interventions that will be effective (see Anger Management 2: Counseling Strategies and Skills [ERIC Digest # EDO-CG-03-11]).

Children's Programs

25 Ways to Help Children Control Their Anger

25 Ways to Help Children Control Their Anger, developed by Lawrence E. Shapiro of Childswork/Childsplay, is geared toward children and is designed to be used with individuals. It is based on cognitive behavioral theory and focuses on relaxation, recognition of feelings and emotions, and awareness of behavioral triggers (Jahnke, 1998).

The Anger Control Kit

The Anger Control Kit, developed by Lawrence E. Shapiro of Childswork/Childsplay, is geared toward children. It covers six modalities: affective, behavioral, cognitive, developmental, educational, and social. It is composed of 38 techniques and focuses on teaching self-regulation, expression of feelings, stress management, and peer mediation skills (Jahnke, 1998).

How I Learned to Control My Temper

How I Learned to Control My Temper, developed by Debbie Pincus of Childswork/Childsplay, is geared toward children and is designed to be used with individuals. It is based on cognitive behavioral theory and utilizes worksheets to help children recognize feelings and emotions, control their temper, be assertive, and develop empathy (Jahnke, 1998).

Adolescent Programs

Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

Aggression Replacement Training (ART), developed by A.P. Goldstein and B. Glick (1987), geared toward adolescents, is unique in its design because it has a behavioral component (structured learning), an affective component (anger control training), and a cognitive component (moral reasoning). The Anger Control Training (ACT) component is based on the earlier work of Novaco (cognitive preparation, skill acquisition, application training) and Feindler (triggers, cues, reminders, reducers, self-evaluation). The objectives are to teach adolescents to understand what causes them to feel angry and act aggressively and then to teach techniques they can use to reduce their anger and aggression. Often adolescents feel they do not have a choice in many situations: they feel their only choice is aggression. The goal of training is to give them skills necessary to make a choice.

The general format of the Anger Control Training involves modeling by trainers, role playing by trainees, and feedback. The ABC model provides the foundation of the anger control training. A is the trigger (what triggered the problem), B is the behavioral response (what one did in response to A), and C is the consequences (to oneself and to the other person). Since it is important to know one is angry before one uses self-control to reduce anger or to impact one's reaction, adolescents also learn about triggers (both external and internal), cues (physical signs that let one know he/she is angry) and anger reducers (e.g., deep breathing, backward counting, pleasant imagery).

The program teaches adolescents to choose their response in a conflict situation and to think ahead about short- and long-term consequences, internal and external consequences, and social consequences of their potential actions. The program makes use of self-evaluation in which an adolescent judges for himself how well he has handled a conflict, self-rewards himself based on handling a situation well, and coaches himself based on how he could have handled it better.

The program also addresses the concept of an Angry Behavior Cycle in which participants are encouraged to consider what they might be doing to make others angry versus just dealing with what others do to make them angry. Finally, since the Anger Control Training (ACT) teaches what not to do (be aggressive) and how not to do it (anger control technique), ART includes a component of learning what to do in place of being aggressive. This behavioral component of learning and using new behaviors is incorporated through structured learning skills.

ACE Model

Taylor (as cited in Besley, 1999) developed a cognitive anger management approach for adolescents that focuses on the boundaries of angry situations, the consequences that could develop from certain choices, and appropriate positive responses. The positive response model is known as ACE and it provides three responses for any given situation. A is for adapt: when one cannot change the circumstances, one can choose to accept the situation and change one's behavior. C is for confront in a productive and calm manner. E is for escape: for varied reasons, there are times when one cannot adapt nor confront the situation, so one must retreat physically or emotionally. It is important to learn how to identify an angry situation as needing an A or C or E response and then consider consequences that might occur with each response. Finally, it is important to focus on one's own responses to the problem versus on the intent of others.

The Anger Coping Program

The Anger Coping Program, developed by Jonh E. Lochman, Susanne Dunn and Bonnie Klimes-Dougan is geared toward aggressive adolescents and is designed to be utilized in groups. It is based on Dodge's model of perceiving and deciding how to react to problematic social situations. It is composed of 18 sessions with a focus on physiological awareness, perspective taking, social problem solving, and self-instruction to inhibit impulsive responding (Jahnke, 1998).

Anger Control Training for Adolescents in Residential Treatment

Anger Control Training for Adolescents in Residential Treatment, developed by R.F. Dangel, J.P. Descher, and R.R. Rasp, is geared toward adolescent groups. It is based on cognitive behavioral theory and is composed of 6 sessions with a focus on thought stopping and relaxation (Jahnke, 1998).

Anger Control Training for Children and Teens

Anger Control Training for Children and Teens, developed by Dr. John F. Taylor, is geared toward both children and adolescents; it is designed to be used individually or in groups. It is based on cognitive theory and focuses on defining, expressing, and managing anger. It is available from Mar*co Products, Inc. (Jahnke, 1998).

High School Programs

Anger Management for Youth: Stemming Aggression and Violence

Anger Management for Youth: Stemming Aggression and Violence, developed by Dr. Leona Eggert, is geared toward high school students and is designed to be utilized in groups. It is based on cognitive behavioral theory and focuses on linking thoughts, feelings, and behavior; discovering consequences of angry outbursts; and thought stopping (Jahnke, 1998).

ThinkFirst Curriculum

The ThinkFirst Curriculum, developed by Dr. James Larson and Dr. Judith McBride of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, is geared toward aggressive adolescent and high school students; it is designed to be utilized in groups. It is based on cognitive behavioral theory and focuses on the ABC model, physiological cues, direct and indirect provocations, assertion techniques, problem solving, and self-evaluation (Jahnke, 1998).

Adult and Adolescent Programs

RETHINK

The RETHINK curriculum, developed by R.J. Fetsch and C.J. Schultz in conjunction with Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences (Fetsch & Schultz, & Wahler, 1999), is designed for parents and teens and is unique in that it incorporates information about normal childhood development issues and about normal parenting issues. The objectives are to increase participants' knowledge about parenting, child development, and anger management; assist participants in improving attitudes about parenting and anger management; assist participants in making positive behavioral changes; increase participants' anger control levels; decrease participants' unrealistic expectations of their children; and decrease participants' family conflict, anger, and violence. The program is built around the following concepts:

- R = RECOGNIZE anger in yourself and others
- E = EMPATHIZE with the other person
- T = THINK about the situation differently
- H = HEAR what is being said
- I = INTEGRATE respect and love when expressing anger
- N = NOTICE your body's reactions to anger
- K = KEEP your attention on the present problem

The Anger Workbook

The Anger Workbook, developed by Dr. Less Carter and Dr. Frank Minirth, is geared toward high school and adult individuals but it can be incorporated into a group format. It is based on cognitive theory and is composed of 13 steps that focus on self-reflection, understanding how emotions feed anger, and identifying learned patterns of relating, thinking and behaving that influence anger. It is available from Thomas Nelson Publishers (ISBN # 0-0-8407-4574-5; (Jahnke, 1998).

Anger Management Program

The Anger Management Program, developed by Linda Panaccione, LISW, is geared toward adolescents and adults and can be utilized in individual work or in group work. It is based on cognitive behavioral theory and is composed on 10 steps with a focus on recognizing triggers and determining replacement behavior (Jahnke, 1998).

Conclusion

This is a brief sample of the wide variety of anger management interventions available to counselors and other mental health practitioners. Many other interventions can be found by reviewing professional literature and searching the Internet. But not all interventions are will work for all clients so remember to find one that will effectively meet a clients' needs and abilities.

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